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***There seems to be no end to what teachers are expected to learn.***

This is especially so when it comes to addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems. The increasing concern about mental health in schools is a current example.

It is clear that teachers are confronted with students with many needs. Ask teachers about student mental health concerns, they will readily acknowledge they don't know enough about what to do. So advocates for mental health are quick to call for "integrating mental health training into teacher in-service trainings." ***Seems logical.*** Except it ignores all the other things teachers indicate they don't know and advocates want teacher in-service to cover.

This is not to say that some of the basics in teacher preparation and in-service shouldn't be changed. The point is that adding more and more and more in an ad hoc and piecemeal manner is irresponsible and counterproductive. It feeds the myth that teachers are super-beings and draws attention away from the need for schools to *transform* how they organize and provide teachers and students with essential supports that enhance equity of opportunity for whole student development.

Effective teacher preparation and in-service must be well-designed with a *whole school* approach. While teachers are central to teaching, *teachers alone can't and shouldn't be expected to be the answer to student and school improvement, especially in schools where large numbers of students are not doing well.*

Personnel development has to emphasize the interdependent role and functions of all staff. From this perspective, it is critical that such development be done in the context of teachers, student support staff, specialists, administrators, students, parents, etc. working together, collaboratively problem-solving, and learning from each other. Working together, of course, is a key element in enhancing a positive school climate and improving outcomes.

See:

>*Improving School Improvement*

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*

Both accessible at: [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

(Also, in a couple of weeks watch for the Center's fall e-journal article - *Rethinking MTSS to Better Address Barriers to Learning.*)

Let us know if you need additional information.

Best wishes,

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